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ABSTRACT

A practicum was designed to improve the reading growth and achievement of 60 eighth-grade students who were one or more years behind grade level by utilizing CNN Newsroom and the "USA Today" newspaper as an integral part of the reading program. Pre- and posttests were administered to measure outcomes. The six areas measured were: (1) word meaning; (2) supporting ideas; (3) summarizing; (4) relationships and outcomes; (5) inferences and generalizations; and (6) point of view, propaganda, and fact/nonfact. In addition to CNN Newsroom and the "USA Today" newspaper, the reading program included Reader's Workshop whereby students read self-selected literature, and Reader's Theater. Analysis of data revealed positive results utilizing CNN Newsroom and the "USA Today" newspaper. Of the 60 students, 34 showed reading gains in two or more reading areas. CNN Newsroom and "USA Today" met the needs of many students. (Contains 27 references and two tables of data; reading assignment sheets, sustained silent reading forms, scoring sheets, and reading inventory are attached.) (Author/RS)

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ED 369 041

Eighth Grade Reading Improvement with CNN Newsroom and USA Today

by

Wanda Jean Zamorano

Cluster 46

A Practicum II Report presented to the
Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

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This practicum report was submitted by Wanda J. Zamorano under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

March 11, 1994
Date of Final Approval of Report

Paul Borthwick
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ABSTRACT

Eighth Grade Reading Improvement with CNN Newsroom and USA Today. Zamorano, Wanda J., 1993: Practicum Report, Nova University, Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies, Secondary/ Reading Teachers

This practicum was designed to improve the reading growth and achievement of eighth grade students who were one or more years behind grade level utilizing CNN Newsroom and the USA Today newspaper as an integral part of the reading program. Pre- and post-tests were administered to measure outcomes. The six areas measured were (1) word meaning, (2) supporting ideas, (3) summarizing, (4) relationships and outcomes, (5) inferences and generalizations, and (6) point of view, propaganda, fact/nonfact.

In addition to CNN Newsroom and the USA Today newspaper the reading program included Reader's Workshop whereby students read self-selected literature, and Reader's Theater.

Analysis of the data revealed positive results utilizing CNN Newsroom and the USA Today newspaper. Of sixty students thirty-four showed reading gains in two or more reading areas. CNN Newsroom and USA Today met the needs of many students.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

DESCRIPTION OF WORK SETTING AND COMMUNITY

The work setting was an eighth grade reading improvement classroom in a junior high school in a suburban community. Students scoring one or more levels below their grade placement on a reading diagnostic test given in the fall of seventh grade were required to take eighth grade reading improvement. The school is an "I Can School" that adheres to the philosophy that every student can succeed.

The population involved consisted of 60 eighth grade reading improvement students, 38 males, 22 females and three students with Limited English Proficiency. Of the three students, one had a Spanish background, one a French background, and one an African nation background. Seven students were minorities: one French, one Hispanic, one from an African nation, and four African Americans. There were 53 Anglos. The community is comprised of professional men and women who value education. The school philosophy is that every student has the right to learn and to achieve their potential.

The school community and the parents adhere to "well-roundedness" for the students. In addition to a strong academic program, the school offers many extra-curricular activities. Most parents, also, allow their students to participate in other activities such as an assortment of private lessons, church youth activities and philanthropic/benevolent activities. Teachers and students enjoy strong parental support and involvement which was demonstrated not only by individual student concerns, but also, through the very active participation in the Parent Teacher Association. Most parents were very goal oriented and had high expectations of the faculty and their respective students. Education excellence was the norm. Most parents were willing to provide tutors if their children demonstrated a need.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The writer was the sole eighth grade reading improvement teacher and has 22 years teaching experience including two years in migrant education grades K-8, and 20 years of reading improvement experience in junior high school. The writer holds a reading specialist certificate in grades K-13. There were seven periods in each day and reading improvement was taught six of

those seven periods. A self-contained classroom was provided. A very comfortable, self-contained pleasant classroom that was conducive to learning was provided.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

PROBLEM DESCRIPTION

Eighth grade students in reading improvment classes were achieving below grade level. A prerequisite to be in eighth grade reading improvment was that the student be reading below grade level. The test used to determine reading level was the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills which was given in the fall of seventh grade. From these scores, the counselors placed students scoring below grade level in reading on the criterion-reference test into eighth grade reading improvement classes.

Some of the eighth grade students took seventh grade reading or reading improvement. Seventh grade reading was for students scoring on or above seventh grade reading level based on testing done in sixth grade. Some of the eighth grade students took reading improvement in seventh grade which meant they scored below grade level in reading as a sixth grade student, too. Counselors used this information for placement.

And then there were those eighth grade reading improvement students who "slipped through the cracks" or just moved in and

took reading improvement in another school. If a student transferred in with low language arts grades, the counselor recommended the student take eighth grade reading improvement. There were also occasions when parents requested their children to take reading improvement if their scores were borderline, or they scored below grade level in reading on another test. All students took reading through grade six; it was possible for students to test out of reading. All seventh grade students were tested. Only students scoring below eighth grade reading level took eighth grade reading improvement.

Students had difficulty with written and expressive language skills. Students also had difficulty with on grade level vocabulary and comprehension skills. They had not always been matched with their learning style. Because students had not been able-readers, their attitude and motivation had been affected. Few reading improvement students were "self-starters". Therefore, the problem was that eighth grade reading improvement students were reading below grade level and had vocabulary and comprehension difficulties.

Problem Documentation

Evidence of the problem was supported by observations, informal discussion, needs assessment and test scores. Teacher monitored reading activites revealed reading difficulties with vocabulary and comprehension skills. Oral and written exercises caused students to have difficulty with word pronunciation, word meaning, recall of story events, and inferential skills. Time off task was repeatedly observed and when questioned, students said they did not understand their textbook or other reading material. Students had a questioning look as though to be confused because of lacking an understanding of the contents. Wrong responses on comprehension checks orally and written indicated poor reading skills. Not grasping concepts often meant not understanding the material because of their reading difficulty. Consequently, when eighth grade students had repeated difficulty with eighth grade reading material they were not reading on eighth grade reading level. Students having reading difficulties in eighth grade will have reading difficulties beyond eighth grade unless there is intervention.

Informal reading inventories and teacher/student discussions denoted reading difficulties with word recognition and word recall including word omissions and substitutions, and with comprehension questions including facts, main idea, inference, vocabulary, and sequence of events.

The findings of a needs assessment administered by their teacher at the beginning of school revealed reading skill weaknesses in word meaning, supporting ideas, summarizing, relationship outcomes, inferences, and generalizations, point-of -view, propoganda, and fact/non-fact. Students scored 69 percent or below in one or more areas. These areas of weakness became targeted areas.

Test scores showed non-mastery of 69 percent or less in one or more areas on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills. Counselors used the results of this test for class placement in the following term. Areas tested included word meaning, supporting ideas, summarizing, relationship outcomes, inferences, and generalizations, point-of-view, propaganda, and fact/non-fact. To restate then, seventh grade academic test scores of the current eighth grade students showed several areas of non-mastery in

reading. Although all of the eighth grade reading improvement students read orally and silently, they just did not read at grade level. Comprehension and vocabulary checks indicated areas of weaknesses.

Table I

Eighth grade students scoring below grade level in reading on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills

Total Number of Eighth Grade Students	Eighth Grade Students Below Grade Level In Reading
310	60

Causative Analysis

Eighth grade students were reading below grade level for a variety of reasons. Some included delayed learning maturation, having to learn English at school rather than at home, little exposure to the printed word, basal reading instruction as the only reading instruction, and the students' learning styles were not matched with proper reading instruction which delayed their

reading skills development. There were cases where students in the primary grades had a visual or audio problem which went undetected during crucial reading skill time. Also, intelligence quotient tests revealed slowness which required additional instruction, remediation, and tutoring. When these factors went unnoticed and undetected it had a direct impact on students which often resulted in their reading difficulty.

Guessing on comprehension responses indicated a lack of understanding or not caring. Repeatedly asking fellow students what unfamiliar words were indicated non-word recognition or not knowing what the word meant. Students exhibiting poor reading skills was an indication of a dislike for reading. Areas of difficulty were detected in stammering, stuttering, omitting words, and guessing during oral reading.

Student records, cumulative folders and teacher assessments of students, and report cards, suggested an inquiry into the students' reading progress. Some students were not ready to settle down and read when they began school, and therefore missed reading instruction at an early age which hampered their learning

throughout. The students were not prepared with adequate reading skills to be successful in junior high.

English as a second language students were delayed in reading because of having to learn the English language before learning to read in English. This put them behind at the onset and some students did not catch up right away. Students must hear a language spoken and be able to speak the language before they can possibly learn to read in that language.

Students not having printed material around at home were at a disadvantage because it limited their vocabulary. Parents are great role models and when they did not read, students did not see the need or enjoyment. The knowledge base lacked experience from which to draw and make associations and was reflected when the students came to school, which in turn delayed their reading ability.

Basal reading instruction did not meet every student's reading needs or interests. Some teachers chose not to use language experience, whole language learning, etc., which meant the students' reading styles were not addressed.

Once students received visual and hearing care, they were then in a situation of playing catch up. Students who had these difficulties in eighth grade reading improvement were still trying to "catch up." Also playing catch up were the students who had "regular reading instruction" in the primary grades presented at a faster pace than their IQ could allow them to process.

Relationship of the Problem to Literature

Review of the literature gave evidence that there are many other students reading below grade level. This is a local, state, and national problem that educators daily wrestle with. Review of the literature gave evidence of reading difficulties and that reading skills needed strengthening.

There was dissatisfaction with the level of literacy of American youth; therefore, it was understandable that a call for change had ensued (Fischer, Martin & Fischer, 1992). Few teachers were pleased with atomistic, disassociated learning; most hungered for ways to make language arts instruction more meaningful and enhance student's discourse mastery.

There was evidence in the literature of the problem that reading skills needed strengthening. Cocchiarella (1992) believed

that the teaching of reading is still evolving. She had taught in an individualized reading lab, been involved in connecting students with text, taught the whole language approach, and used cooperative learning groups for understanding expository text. She knew that if children learn to read for fun, through literature, they would be able to approach the transition to reading for information with confidence. She believed that even with all of these changes, some day we would get the teaching of reading right.

Richek (1989) defined a reading disability as a debilitating problem for many children, adolescents, and adults in North America and throughout the world. Without help, these individuals were destined to suffer throughout their lives. As a primary cause of school failure, poor reading ability led to lowered self-esteem and serious emotional overlays. Moreover, reading problems prevented individuals from reaching desired career goals and robbed them of the opportunity to read for pleasure and enjoyment.

Miller (1988) believed it was the right of all children to read as well as their capabilities permit.

Gannett (1988) viewed literacy as a commodity of measurable value to those who acquired it. This proposition was

easy to accept if the many benefits of acquiring literacy were considered: better jobs, more productive use of leisure time, greater self-sufficiency, increased ability to help one's children with school work and hobbies.

Allen (1991) said we have an increasing number of students who were not succeeding. She believed that the reading curriculum might be changed to reduce the risks many children incurred during literacy learning. She felt that following the basal curriculum rigidly was contributing directly to school failure and grade promotion was based largely on progress in the basal. Further, she felt that too many students were not becoming truly literate, that is real readers and writers.

Several causes for the problem were revealed in the literature. Allington (1988) said it best. The majority of teachers had no idea about the instruction provided children by other teachers. Without shared knowledge, curricular consistency was unlikely. Without clear curricular goals, shared knowledge was unlikely. He stated instructional consistency was important since mastery of complex skills typically required a balance between product and process. In reading, too much focus on skill knowledge

was unproductive unless substantial opportunity to use it in real reading activities was part of instruction. Allington said that learner errors signaled either the inappropriateness of the task, the ineffectiveness of the instruction, or both.

Allen (1991) claimed few remedial programs provided students with enough time, individual attention, or appropriate instruction to overcome the gap between their performance and that of their classmates. Retention had not proven effective for students academically or socially. "Learning the basics" had often led to an emphasis on teaching "componential" reading and writing skills in isolation.

The various topical areas researched were reading and student achievement, computer assisted reading instuction, technological trends, electronic learning, newspapers in the classroom, and the role for future educational technologists. It was clearly indicated and substantiated in the literature that there are students who read below grade level, which is a national, state and local problem.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS

The goal for this practicum is for the students in the eighth grade reading improvement classes to improve their reading skills.

Expected Outcomes

It is expected that eighth grade reading improvement students will demonstrate improvement in their reading skills. The selected reading skill areas are (1) word meaning, (2) supporting ideas, (3) summarizing, (4) relationships and outcomes, (5) inferences and generalizations, and (6) point of view, propaganda, fact/nonfact. The expected outcome will be improvement in two or more of these six skills. The standard of performance will be 30 out of 60 eighth grade reading improvement students will score 70 or above on an academic skills post-test.

Measurement of Outcomes

The evaluation tool was TAAS (Texas Assessment of Academic Skills). Practice Test A & B was administered for the pre-test and Practice Test C & D was administered for the post-

test. Two days (two consecutive class periods) were allotted for administration. This was not a timed test; it was a reading skills test. The pre-test pinpointed student needs. The post-test was to determine mastery. Mastery was 70 percent. The questions on both the pre- and post-test were from six categories. Word meaning questions included multiple meaning words, prefixes and suffixes, context clues, and specialized/technical words, sequential order, and complex directions. Summarizing questions included main idea (stated or paraphrased, implied), and summarizing. Relationship outcomes questions included cause and effect, and predicting outcomes. Inferences and generalizations questions included graphics, logical conclusions, making generalizations, evaluating and making judgments, and feelings and emotions. Point of view, propaganda, fact/nonfact questions included author's point of view, persuasive devices, fact and nonfact, and compare and contrast.

The main evaluation tool was the TAAS (Texas Assessment of Academic Skills) for the six skill areas. In addition, the following evaluation tools were employed. For word meaning questions that included multiple meaning words, prefixes and suffixes, context

clues, and specialized/technical words, an informal dictionary exercise served as the evaluation tool. Relay teams looked up designated words and shared findings with the class.

Supporting ideas questions that included facts and details, sequential order, and complex directions were measured informally by direct questioning from Scope magazine.

Summarizing questions included main idea (stated or paraphrased, implied), and summarizing, and were measured informally by reading a selection, writing down the main ideas followed by a summary. The teacher graded each one individually.

Relationship questions included cause and effect, and predicting which was measured by stating examples of each. From CNN Newsroom, students recorded on paper causes and effects from the various topics. They also made predictions from the various topics as to "what will happen next" based upon the information given on that particular segment.

Inferences and generalizations questions included graphics, logical conclusions, making generalizations, evaluating and making judgments, and feelings and emotions. These were measured by informal discussions. Using CNN Newsroom and USA Today the

class engaged in discussion of the various graphics and the information included in each. After viewing CNN or reading an article, the class was asked "now what, what conclusion can you make based on the evidence presented?" Is there a generalization that can be made? If so, what and explain. Can the author of an article be trusted; are they qualified to be writing the article? What feeling, emotion, or bias does the author have? What feeling emotion, or bias does the author want the reader to have?

Point of view, propaganda, fact/nonfact questions included author's point of view, persuasive devices, fact and nonfact, and compare and contrast which was measured by a discussion of literary selections. Using short selections from Scope magazine, the class determined the author's point of view, what persuasive devices were utilized, cited statements of fact and nonfact, and shared examples of comparison and contrast of characters in the selection.

The evaluative instruments were selected because they best reflect the students' strengths and weaknesses in reading skills. Practice Tests A, B, C, and D and the TAAS review test have the same format as the actual TAAS tests the students will take in

high school. Their familiarity with the format and the kinds of questioning proved invaluable. The skills on these evaluative instruments were skills included in the state and local curriculum. They were referred to as essential elements. Another reason the Practice Tests A, B, C, and D and the TAAS review tests were used was because they were not timed and to get a true indication of reading strengths and weaknesses a timed test is a factor in diagnoses.

Informal assessments were to intermittently allow for remediation and guided practice for student success. The informal assessments were to aid in time management in knowing how much time to allow for further needed reading instruction. It would allow targeted reading skills instruction in an informal situation.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

DISCUSSION AND EVALUATION OF SOLUTIONS

Eighth grade students in reading improvement classes were achieving below grade level. Solutions found in the literature included a variety of reading approaches and techniques. One solution found was repeated reading, a procedure where students reread literature. Dowhower (1989) claimed that repeated reading procedures produce gains "in speed and accuracy, result in better phrasing and expression, and enhance recall and understanding for both good and poor readers."

Literature based/whole language reading instruction was a possible solution. Tunnel and Jacobs (1989) said teachers who have literature based reading instruction to challenge the basal tradition boast stunning levels of success with all types of students. Paul and Urban (1992) showed how literature-based reading can dramatically improve reading ability. With the Accelerated Reader, students were motivated to read more. Allen

(1991) found success in teaching and learning in whole language classrooms.

Peer tutoring and paired reading was a possibility. Topping (1989) claimed structured pair-work between children of differing ability has great potential for effective co-operative learning. Cocchiarella (1992) used cooperative learning groups to learn how to apply strategies for understanding expository text. She said bringing parents into the learning arena was an important breakthrough. Weper (1991) called for more simulations requiring collaborative problem solving and continued use of motivational features of existing programs.

The shadowing technique was also a possibility. Allington (1988) said following selected remedial readers for entire school days was a powerful tool for understanding how a school addresses the learning needs of particular children. He stated that it was important that learners experience tasks that require the integration of skills into the complex process. All learners needed large quantities of successful experiences in order to acquire fluent and automatic abilities.

The computer reading program was a viable solution. The Josten's Computer Reading Program was a step-by-step approach in achieving reading skills.

The CNN Newsroom and/or newpaper reading solution had a strong following. Palkert (1992) uses CNN Newsroom to help her students understand current affairs. "Textbooks do not always link the real world to kids it seems like TV does." Grossman (1992) showed how to use cable TV and the national education goal "every adult in America will be literate" to involve communities in school reform. Killackey (1993) said of principal Larry Bruce, "Technology can't supplant a good teacher, but it can make a good teacher more productive; TV can't replace books or the newspaper, but we can use it to enhance and speed up education."

Goodfried (1987) used television and Junior Great Books to give students in her remedial reading class status. Rocky (1992) said Zamorano used CNN Newsroom as a previewing technique to introduce newspaper reading. She claimed all reading skills can be taught from a newspaper. Robertson (1993) used CNN Newsroom and Newsweek as a multimedia approach for student understanding and learning.

Dwyer (1990) used USA Today and other periodicals so that students can learn to read more competently while learning about the world. Palmer (1989) indicated that the use of newspapers in the schools has a positive effect on student attitudes toward reading the newspapers, student competency in reading the newspaper, the improvement of reading achievement, and students competency in critical thinking.

Fischer (1992) utilized the newspaper in multiple approaches. She stated that the newspaper can help students develop their reading and writing processes, to inspire discussion and writing, to provide opportunities for oral language development, to increase vocabulary and command of word use, and to develop in students a sense of the power of language. Gannett (1988) said the most successful venture in literacy education had been The Literacy Challenge, a state-level competition in cooperation with the newspaper USA Today.

Vander Ark (1973) used a "News Laboratory" to develop attitudes that learning can be fun and beneficial. Reading rate, comprehension, listening abilities, and writing abilities improved. Rodine (1986) used the newspaper as a teaching tool to promote

reading and critical thinking skills. Morse (1986) claimed newspapers are valuable educational resources because they contain material that is varied, up-to-date, and interesting to students. Students improved in listening and reading comprehension by participating in various newspaper activities.

Gunn (1982) offered suggestions for the student and teacher to become active users of the mass media. Berryman (1974) designed instructional modules to improve newspaper reading skills. Copley (1978) provided techniques for using the newspaper in a variety of subject areas. Garrison (1993) reported that teacher Carla Robertson brought "meaning" to her classroom through the use of CNN Newsroom. She advised that electronic media technology may seem intimidating at first, but it is well worth the effort. She claimed even students who seem bored by reading American history come to life with the use of CNN Newsroom and Newsweek.

Zamorano (Rocky, 1992) related that her students begrudge working on reading skills. But now that she introduces her newspaper by previewing CNN Newsroom her students become motivated and eager to read and learn.

Because of the convincing evidence of CNN Newsroom and USA Today and their effectiveness in improving reading skills, this was a method to teach the eighth grade Reading Improvement students. They have not had this method and the literature suggested results for improving reading skills.

Description of Selected Solution

Eighth grade reading improvement students had had no experience with literature/mass media reading instruction to enhance reading growth and achievement. An integrated approach was used whereby a reading skill was targeted in direct teacher instruction, guided practice, independent practice, the student-selected literature in Reader's Workshop, journal writing, and CNN Newsroom that introduced topics in USA Today.

Other ideas explored were to compare and contrast information from CNN Newsroom and USA Today on a chart to practice notetaking and to learn from both mediums.

The day before news publication of USA Today, students predicted what they forecasted to be in the news.

Another idea was to use CNN Newsroom and USA Today to

teach the PQRST study technique which lent itself well as a technique for content areas subjects.

Before implementation, reading teachers and the principal had knowledge of the project and they were invited to have input, both comments and suggestions, at all stages which was documented in the writer's log and journal. Informally it was determined which students read the newspaper and viewed CNN. Checklists of reading skills (or essential elements designed by the State of Texas and this school district) taught were enumerated for reasons of accountability and evaluation by the writer, the principal, reading teachers, and parents as well as other interested persons.

Eighth grade reading improvement students had had no experience with literature/mass media reading instruction to enhance reading growth and achievement. Using CNN Newsroom prior to newspaper reading established background knowledge base. This approach was different and proved motivating. By providing an integrated approach, literature based instruction, nor content reading was slighted. By addressing learning styles, thinking skills were challenged. Current mass media provided

updated, meaningful material and linked school reading to the real world. Students read for real-life purposes. All reading skills were taught from the newspaper.

Report of Action Taken

The method used introduced the reading skill targeted, directed teacher instruction, guided practice, and independent practice. Materials used were student-selected literature, journal writing, CNN Newsroom, and USA Today newspaper.

Daily lesson plans included students reading self-selected literature on Mondays and Fridays. The teacher introduced the skill lesson with guided practice utilizing CNN Newsroom on Tuesdays. Students did independent practice using the USA Today newspaper on Wednesdays. On Thursdays, students wrote journal letters, wrote stories using a prompt, solved a problem situation, had reader's theater using prepared play scripts, and oral readings and discussion.

An example of one week is given: Students went to the school library as a class every other Monday to check out self -selected literature. Lists of books by genre were available upon request. The librarian, library aide and the classroom teacher were

present to offer assistance in suggesting titles, authors, and/or locating literature. Students could go to the library individually before or after school, and during lunch should the need arise.

For managerial and accountability purposes students would daily record their reading assignment on their reading assignment sheet (see Appendix A) whereby students circled Reader's Workshop on Mondays and Fridays and circled Other Applications on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. For example, a topic was multi-meaning words on Mondays. Students read their self-selected literature, then toward the end of class they wrote a summary statement citing an example of word with multi-meanings from their literature that day. Students shared orally their summary statements and told the multi-meanings of the word and how it was used in their book. This allowed vocabulary growth for the entire class. Also, toward the end of class students recorded their reading on their Sustained Silent Reading form (see Appendix B). This was recorded daily so that the students could keep up with where they left off. The teacher could see what was read and how much, and the parents could see the literature their child chose to read. All reading was kept in the students' binder for parents'

perusal.

On Tuesdays, the lesson was presented. For example, if summary and main idea were the lesson, the objective was to identify the best summary of a selection. Students had to show that they understood what the passage as a whole was all about. Using the think-along process the teacher thought aloud to determine the correct answer choice for a question after having read a rather lengthy selection. Students had individual copies to follow along. Strategies and tips were given.

It was recommended that students:

1. Choose the summary that covers the whole passage, not just part or parts of it.

2. Not be fooled by a summary of the most important fact or detail, or even of the most important paragraph.

3. Not be fooled by answer choices that are true but incomplete.

After the mini-lesson on summary and main idea, students viewed CNN Newsroom and summarized each topic in a sentence or two. The topics were provided before viewing. Students at random were called upon to share their summaries at which time the rest

of the class discussed whether the oral answers were indeed summaries of the topics or details. The teacher reviewed all answers outside class and made notes of any discrepancies. For the remainder of the class, the students read the USA Today.

On Wednesday, the lesson was reviewed including the strategies and tips. A selected newspaper article was read orally by the students and the teacher, then the article was summarized for guided practice. For independent practice, students read three articles of their choice and summarized them on notebook paper. Some were shared at the end of class, and all were reviewed by the teacher. On Thursday, those students who demonstrated non-mastery formed a group in which the teacher went over problem areas and reinforced the think-along process, and strategies and tips.

The first and final weeks were devoted to pre- and post-tests to determine strengths and weaknesses (see Appendix C). Students had to score 70 percent for mastery. Also, during the first week students were given a reading inventory (see Appendix D) to enable the teacher to become better informed of their reading ability.

Every two or three weeks students wrote journal letters and summarized their self-selected book (see Appendix E). Another week, the teacher had story prompts whereby students chose one and finished writing the story. Stories were shared the next day. There were weeks when students targeted problem solving Each student was given the same problem. For example, students had to take a position and defend it for "The United States can't solve Russia's problems, but can we help with reform?"
As the students read the problem statement, related literature, and editorials, they made notes indicating their position. Then students wrote their position and shared it with the class. After that, discussion ensued.

On Thursdays, students often had Reader's Theater. Play scripts were provided for each student and each student would have a part and go to the front of the room and "act out" their part as they read the script. This afforded oral reading time as well as comprehension for understanding.

Students had Reader's Workshop on Fridays. When students finished books they kept a log of books completed. When they finished books during class they could opt to read a

classroom library book or periodical. A public librarian did two booktalks and supplied booklists to broaden the students' literature base.

Each week the particular targeted skills were addressed and the format was similar to the one previously mentioned utilizing CNN Newsroom and the USA Today newspaper.

Other activities utilizing CNN Newsroom and USA included comparison/contrast charts, making predictions, and the PQRST study technique Junior Great Books provided excellent sequencing and comprehension checks.
In small groups, students were assigned to read a particular newspaper article, summarize it and draw conclusions from the evidence given.

At midpoint, the students were asked "What would you say to a teacher or student about CNN Newsroom?" The responses were positive.

Students had never approached reading skills utilizing CNN Newsroom and the USA Today newspaper. They were excited about this unique experience as well as being informed of current, real-

life situations. Some students, who were rather reluctant to read the newspaper, became avid readers. These students realized reading was a vehicle utilized to unlock the meaning of newsprint.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

RESULTS

Students in the eighth grade Reading Improvement classes were reading below grade level. The solution strategy selected was literature/mass media assisted reading instruction. An integrated approach was used whereby a reading skill was targeted in direct teacher instruction, guided practice, independent practice, student-selected literature in Reader's Workshop, journal writing CNN Newsroom that introduced topics in a newspaper, and the USA Today newspaper.

The expected outcome was for students to show growth in reading skills. The reading skills areas were (1) word meaning, (2) supporting ideas, (3) summarizing, (4) relationships and outcomes, (5) inferences and generalizations, and (6) point of view, propaganda, fact/nonfact. Each of these six reading skills areas were outcomes that students showed growth in. Thirty-four of the sixty students showed gains in two or more of these six areas. Eighteen of the 60 students attained gains in word meaning; 15 in

supporting ideas; 29 in summarizing; 13 in relationships/ outcomes; 6 in inferences and generalizations; and 26 in point of view/propaganda/fact, nonfact.

Table 2

Students attaining reading gains in two or more areas on the post-test

Total Number of Eighth Graders	Reading Skill Area	Number of Students Attaining Gains
60	Word Meaning	18
60	Supporting Ideas	15
60	Summarizing	29
60	Relationships/Outcomes	13
60	Inferences and Generalizations	6
60	Point of view/Propaganda/Fact,Nonfact	26

Each student took a pre- and post-test on the six targeted reading skills areas and scores were recorded on a chart that included all categories and subdivisions (see Appendix C). A comparison denoted reading growth and achievement. The standard of achievement was 30 out of 60 students would score 70 or above

on two post-test categories that were not mastered in the pre-test.

Discussion

The objective for students in the eighth grade Reading Improvement classes to improve their reading skills came to fruition. The anticipated outcome was 30 out of 60 students to show reading gains in two or more targeted areas, but in actuality 34 of the students showed gains. This means four more students showed gains than what had been anticipated.

The areas students made greatest gains were summarizing; point of view/propaganda/fact, nonfact; word meaning; supporting ideas; and relationships and outcomes. The area indicating the least amount of growth was inferences/generalizations. Some students did well on the pre- and post-test; therefore their gains were not as significant as those students not doing as well. Instruction played a role in student gains. For some students more time was needed for greater gains to be realized. Thirteen students showed gains in more than two areas.

The findings parallel much literature. Palkert (1992) used CNN Newsroom to help her students understand current affairs.

Grossman (1992) showed how to use cable TV and the national education goal "every adult (person) in America will be literate" to involve communities in school reform. Killackey (1993) said of principal Larry Bruce, "Technology can't supplant a good teacher, but it can make a good teacher more productive: TV can't replace books or the newspaper, but we can use it to enhance and speed up education." Goodfried (1987) used television and Junior Great Books to give her remedial reading class status. Rocky (1993) said Zamorano used CNN Newsroom as a previewing technique to introduce newspaper reading. Robertson (1993) used CNN Newsroom and Newsweek as a multimedia approach for student understanding and learning.

Dwyer (1990) used USA Today and other periodicals so that students could learn to read more competently while learning about the world. Palmer (1989) indicated that the use of newspapers in the schools had a positive effect on student attitudes toward reading the newspaper, the improvement of reading achievement, and students competency in critical thinking. Fischer (1992) utilized the newspaper in multiple approaches. Gannett (1988) said the most successful venture in literacy education had been the

Literacy Challenge, a state-level competition in cooperation with the newspaper USA Today. Vander Ark (1973) used a "News Laboratory" to develop attitudes that learning can be fun and beneficial. Rodine (1986) used the newspaper as a teaching tool to promote reading and critical thinking skills. Morse (1986) claimed newspapers are valuable educational resources because they contain material that is varied, up-to-date, and interesting to students. Gunn (1982) offered suggestions for the student and teacher to become active users of the mass media. Berryman (1974) designed instructional modules to improve newspaper reading skills. Copley (1973) provided techniques for using the newspaper in a variety of subject areas. Garrison (1993) reported that teacher Carla Robertson brought "meaning" to her classroom through the use of CNN Newsroom. Zamorano (Rocky, 1993) related that her students begrudge working on reading skills, but not now using CNN Newsroom to introduce the newspaper.

The outcomes were met. This clearly indicates that CNN Newsroom and the USA Today newspaper certainly enhances eighth grade reading instruction. The implication is that this medium has not been justly tapped for student reading achievement.

In summary, with the outcomes having been attained, it behooves educators to include CNN Newsroom and the USA Today newspaper in reading improvement classes. The below reading level students profit from this kind of instruction. There are many factors attributing to the success of CNN Newsroom and USA Today. The novelty of using them jointly in reading is rewarding. The students were actively engaged and all learning styles were addressed. The integrated approach enabled the students to see the relationship of the activities encountered.

Recommendations

1. As a result of positive anticipated outcomes, reading improvement classes at the secondary level should investigate the possibility of utilizing CNN Newsroom and the USA Today newspaper.

2. CNN Newsroom and USA Today are available for year round use in a myriad of classroom settings.

Dissemination

A copy of the practicum report will be presented to the campus principal. He is interested in knowing the impact of jointly

using CNN Newsroom and USA Today which should enable him in making campus decisions regarding the importance of this medium.

Educators in Texas, Ohio, and California have expressed interest in the outcome and possible utilization of this report. They have expressed interest in "reaching" the readers with reading difficulties.

Turner Educational Services, Inc. and Cable in the Classroom will be made aware of the results of this report because the medium coincides with both institutions.

All those receiving a copy of the practicum and/or results will share their reflections and input for further advancement. The writer will gain insights as to the usefulness for others.

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APPENDIX A

READING ASSIGNMENT SHEET

Reading Assignments

_____ Six Weeks

Name _____
Period _____

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3
Monday	Monday	Monday
Kind of Day (circle one): RW or OAP Topic of mini or OAP: Summary of mini or OAP:	RW or OAP Topic: Summary:	RW or OAP Topic: Summary:
Tuesday RW or OAP Topic: Summary:	Tuesday RW or OAP Topic: Summary:	Tuesday RW or OAP Topic: Summary:
Wednesday RW or OAP Topic: Summary:	Wednesday RW or OAP Topic: Summary:	Wednesday RW or OAP Topic: Summary:
Thursday RW or OAP Topic: Summary:	Thursday RW or OAP Topic: Summary:	Thursday RW or OAP Topic: Summary:
Friday RW or OAP Topic: Summary:	Friday RW or OAP Topic: Summary:	Friday RW or OAP Topic: Summary:

Week 4	Week 5	Week 6
Monday RW or OAP Topic: Summary:	Monday RW or OAP Topic: Summary:	Monday Topic: Summary:
Tuesday RW or OAP Topic: Summary:	Tuesday RW or OAP Topic: Summary:	Tuesday RW or OAP Topic: Summary:
Wednesday RW or OAP Topic: Summary:	Wednesday RW or OAP Topic: Summary:	Wednesday RW or OAP Topic: Summary:
Thursday RW or OAP Topic: Summary:	Thursday RW or OAP Topic: Summary:	Thursday RW or OAP Topic: Summary:
Friday RW or OAP Topic: Summary:	Friday RW or OAP Topic: Summary:	Friday RW or OAP Topic: Summary:

APPENDIX B

SUSTAINED SILENT READING FORM

SSR FORM _____SIX WEEKS NAME _____

READING _____

DATE	TITLE OF BOOK	AUTHOR	PAGES START-STOP	DAILY TOTAL	STATUS
8-16					
8-17					
8-18					
8-19					
8-20					
8-23					
8-24					
8-25					
8-26					
8-27					
8-30					
8-31					
9-1					
9-2					
9-3	Holes				
9-6	Holes				
9-7					
9-8					
9-9					
9-10					
9-13					
9-14					
9-15					
9-16					
9-17					
9-20					
9-21					
9-22					
9-23					
9-24					

APPENDIX C

PRE- AND POST-TEST READING SKILLS

SCORING SHEET

49

	NAME	Word Meaning								Supporting Ideas					
		Mult.-meaning words		Prefixes & Suffixes		Context Clues		Specialized/ Tech. Words		Facts & Details		Sequential Order		Complex Directions	
1															
2															
3															
4															
5															
6															
7															
8															
9															
10															
11															
12															
13															
14															
15															
16															
17															
18															
19															
20															

50

Summarizing						Relat. Outcomes				Inferences & Generalizations									
Main Idea Std. or Parap		Main Idea Implied		Summarizing		Cause & Effect		Predicting Outcomes		Graphics		Logical Conclusions		Make Generaliz		Evaluate & Mk. Judgmnts		Feelings & Emotions	

51

Pt. Of View, Propg. Fact/NonFact								Post Test											
Author's Pt of View		Persuasive Devices		Fact & Nonfact		Compare & Contrast		Word Meaning		Supporting Ideas		Summarizing		Relationships Outcomes		Inferances & Generalizations		Point of View	

APPENDIX D

READING INVENTORY

READING INVENTORY

Name _____ Teacher _____
Period _____ Date _____

1. My favorite subject in school is _____
2. I think that reading comic books is _____
3. I sometimes am afraid of _____
4. I never want to _____
5. Most of my teachers are _____
6. Going to college is _____
7. I hope that I can _____
8. I think that my life is _____
9. I like it when my father _____
10. My favorite person is _____
11. I get kind of depressed when _____
12. Doing homework is _____
13. I think that my brother is _____
14. Most of all I would like to get _____
15. My home usually is _____
16. I get angry when _____
17. I am unhappy when _____
18. Grandparents are _____
19. My mother thinks reading is _____
20. I hope that my future is _____
21. I wonder if _____
22. The most important person I know is _____
23. My parents feel that my report card is _____
24. I like to read books about _____

25. I think that school is _____
26. I think reading the newspaper is _____
27. I hope that I will never have to _____
28. The hardest thing about reading is _____
29. I wish I _____
30. I sometimes get nervous when _____
31. I always have thought that reading is _____
32. The easiest thing about reading is _____
33. I am happy when _____
34. I hope that special help in reading _____
35. I don't like it when my mother _____
36. Studying in school is _____
37. I think that my sister is _____
38. I like it when my mother _____
39. The thing I like best about reading is _____
40. I would really like to _____
41. One thing I don't like about reading is _____
42. When I get out of school, I hope to _____
43. I sometimes worry about _____
44. I think that reading science books is _____
45. If I could be anything in the world, I would want to be _____
46. I don't like it when my father _____
47. In an English class, I usually like to read most about _____
48. I think that reading social studies books is _____
49. My father thinks that reading is _____
50. I think that reading math word problems is _____

APPENDIX E

JOURNAL LETTERS

Dear Readers,

Your notebook is a place for you, me and your friends to talk this year about books, reading, authors and writing. You'll be chatting about literature in letters to me and friends; we'll write letters back to you. All our letters will stay together, arranged chronologically, as a record of the thinking, learning, and reading we did together.

In your letters talk with us about what you've read. Tell what you noticed. Tell what you thought and felt and why. Tell what you liked and didn't and why. Tell how you read and why. Tell what these books said and meant to you. Ask questions or for help. Write back about your ideas, feelings, experiences, and questions.

When you write to a friend, give your journal to that friend. When a friend gives you his or her journal, you are to answer right away. After you've written back, return the journal to the owner. You may not lose or damage another's journal.

Please date your letters in the upper right hand corner. Please mention the title of the book you're talking about and, since the proper way to indicate the title of a book is to capitalize and underline it (e.g., Tiger Eyes or The Hobbit), please capitalize and under line the titles of books to which you make reference.

Finally, enter the title and author of each book you finish this year on the log sheet you'll keep in the back of your folder. This record will serve you as a quick reference.

Your collection of letters will provide a portion of your grade in reading. Follow the procedures outlined above, and correspond about your thoughts on literature with involvement and care, and you'll do well.

I can't wait for your letters. I can't wait to learn from you, learn with you, and help you learn more.

Yours,
Mrs. Zamorano